

House Republican Press Release

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Senate Unanimously Passes Giegler Bill To Address Unclaimed Ashes At Funeral Homes



2004 Danbury Incident Brought Issue To Light

On Thursday, May 19, the State Senate gave final legislative approval to a bill introduced by State Representative Janice Giegler, R-138th, that would require the state Department of Public Health (DPH) to adopt regulations concerning the disposition of unclaimed cremated remains by funeral homes. A 2004 incident at a Danbury funeral home, in which the state removed 87 sets of cremated human remains, brought to light the fact that state law does not specify how a funeral home should dispose of unclaimed ashes following cremation.

House Bill 5799, An Act Concerning Disposition Of Unclaimed Cremated Remains By Funeral Directors, now goes to Governor M. Jodi Rell for final approval. The language in the bill was crafted in conjunction with the state Attorney General's Office, said Rep. Giegler.

Cremation procedures and the disposal of unclaimed cremated ashes vary between funeral homes. According to published reports, the State of Connecticut closed Danbury's Tomlinson Homestead funeral home in 2002, after an investigation discovered numerous problems. The sets of unclaimed cremated remains were discovered in 2004.

"This bill sets guidelines and establishes a clear process for the disposal of unclaimed or unaccepted remains in a funeral director's possession which current state law does not do," said Rep. Giegler. "The incident at Tomlinson Homestead brought to light a problem that funeral homes throughout Connecticut have experienced for decades and this legislation will finally address."